

COLLOCATION AWARENESS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO READING COMPREHENSION ON FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG

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Abstract

This study aimed to find and describe the relationship between students' collocation knowledge and their reading comprehension. The method used was quantitative method with the correlational study as the research design of study. The population of this study was fifth semester students who enrolled in English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at University of Islam Malang, and 23 students were chosen using purposive-sampling technique. The instruments used for collecting data were adaptation of collocation awareness and reading comprehension tests. The data obtained were calculated by using Shapiro-Wilk to measure the normality of data and Pearson Product Moment Correlation to find out whether there was any relationship between the two variables. Based on the research analysis, the relationship between the two variables was found the value of correlation coefficient was .348. The value was lower than the value of Correlation coefficient table at the significant of 1%, in which $.348 < .549$. It can be drawn a conclusion that there is no significant relationship of both variables, collocation awareness and reading comprehension. In the other words, collocation awareness is not the significant aspect to influence reading comprehension on fifth semester students of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at English Department of University of Islam Malang.

Key words: collocation awareness, reading comprehension, correlation

Introduction

In acquiring language, reading is the foremost activity in comprehending the substance of any texts read by the students. They are able to get information and increase their knowledge through reading. During reading, students' skill is required in order to absorb the message of the text easily. For that reason, reading can be one of the skills which is worthy to be studied like other language skills.

As stated by Schmidt and Richards (2010), listening and reading are receptive skill. As receptive skill, reading obliges readers to interpret the message of written language. Reading simply can be defined as the process of comprehending a text. The text that students read will support them to improve their reading comprehension. Reading is also recognized as a passive activity. Though, reading is not completely passive since while reading, students require to employ their experience, background knowledge, vocabularies, grammatical knowledge with text and other approaches to help them comprehend a text (Pang

et al. 2010). Reading can be a waste of time activity when the readers do not find the meaning of what they read. Therefore, reading is not as simple as it seems to be, because students require some strategies to understand the written language correctly.

One of essential strategies in comprehending a text is vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary is essential in reading since mastering vocabulary can support them to easily comprehend a text. However, mastering the vocabulary is not only knowing word by word, it is as well as knowing the word combinations. Collocation is one of word combinations. It refers to word combinations which commonly bond together. As Lewis (2000, p.132) assumed that collocation is the way words co-occur in language frequently and naturally. In fact, reading English text is not as simple as reading native text. EFL students possibly will have some difficulties in reading English literatures such as books, novels, or any written materials because of various reasons.

One of problems in reading is that the students cannot read efficiently and fully comprehend English texts. According to Kiaee *et al.* (2013), collocation and context significantly have a strong relationship to comprehend a text, lack of collocation awareness can be one of trouble factors in understanding English texts for language students, especially non-native language students who are lack of collocation awareness. Unlike native students, EFL students face certain difficulties in learning collocation, since English is not used in their dialog every day. Consequently, when students read some English written text such as: books, journals, papers, etc., it is complicated to them comprehending the message from the texts. Regarded to previous study, many students deal with some difficulties in understanding English texts because of some unknown vocabularies. Because of lack of collocation awareness, they derive the meaning by interpreting word after word that can make the actual meaning to be biased. Consequently, the students are not easy and slow in understanding the text.

Additionally, Lien in Ganji (2012) exposed in his research that the better of collocation knowledge possessed by EFL students, the better their capabilities to understand a text. Hence, students who do not come up with good collocation

knowledge possibly will translate word-by-word when they read non familiar pattern of words in the English texts. As a result, their understanding of the text will be altered from the original message of the text or they even do not obtain any messages from the text at all. Indeed, reading requires excess of knowing individual words combined together to make meaningful sentence. In this case, practice more in learning collocation is required to expand students' collocation awareness. Therefore, it will stimulate their reading comprehension and understand the text precisely.

Review of Literature

As this study concern on, reading and comprehension are two words collocate one another, in the other words, comprehension outfits reading. Whereas reading is defined as a process of thought that involves some form of reader responses, comprehension is defined as a complete understanding of the text.

Defining the Term and Theoretical Issues on Collocations

Collocation is important and crucial in every language. Collocation can be found in many kinds of text, such as magazines, newspapers, and/or educational texts. When someone hears the word 'collocation', they may have different perspectives to define it because there is not only single definition collocation. This term was first presented by Firth, J.R., it described as the relation of one word with the other words, then expressed it as "the company words keep" (Lewis, 2000).

From lexical point of view, other linguists defined the term of collocation. Lewis (2000) pointed the words that to be considered as collocation, are not combined freely, but the words co-occur naturally. In addition, the statements above are in line with McCharty and O'Dell (2005) who argued that collocation is combination of words in a language which is closely associated each other in natural way, for instance, it is common to say she has got blonde hair rather than she has got yellow hair. Although both of the sentences have similar meaning, students are not suggested to collocate one word with other words as they wish.

Since there are many words combinations that usually stick together, this does not mean that all co-occurring words can be considered as collocation. Then, there are no rules to combine words to be collocation, readers usually determined the collocation by seeing the words that often stick together in common sense. In short, collocation consists two or more words that sound naturally for native language.

Many experts classify collocation into large categories including grammatical collocation and lexical collocation. In grammatical collocation, the words occur together within a combination of grammatical and lexical word (Lewis, 2000). The co-occurring words consist of noun, verb, or adjective, plus grammatical structure or a preposition such as an infinitive or clause. A grammatical structure is a unit of language which exist in the text is not due to any meaning, but its grammatical function. Then, lexical collocation is the words occur together within two lexical different elements (Lewis, 2000). Unlike grammatical collocation, lexical collocation does not contain of infinitives, prepositions, or clauses, but typically contains of various combination of verbs, adverbs nouns, and adjectives. Lexical item defined as unit of language which represents particular meaning area which having unique pattern of combination with other lexical items.

Having vocabulary knowledge does not only know words but also know the possibilities of the combined words. Students should be able to combine words to form phrases, and to form grammatical patterns, clauses, and sentences in order to use a language. The combination of words with words usually has been called as collocation. Meanwhile, the ability to store sequences of words as the bases of language learning is called collocation awareness.

Having knowledge of collocation is clearly crucial for foreign language students in learning English. Hill in Lewis (2000) pointed out that up to 70% of all someone says, hears, reads or writes can be contained some form of fixed expression. It seems the knowledge of collocation associates to the ability of language learning. Developing collocation awareness can help students to establish an appropriate understanding of text. The reason why students do not

understand written text is because students read every word as if it were separate from every other word. In other words, collocation is not known as expressive phrases that would impede their interpretation of the text. Besides, well-knowing collocation can support students to use suitable words in constructing language. For example, the words beautiful and handsome which have similar meaning. However, it is not fitting to say, “she is a handsome girl” or “he is a beautiful boy”. There are many collocations that are more fitting to be applied naturally in some way. It means that the certain context is dominant in using collocation to create the relevance of words.

However, for English as foreign language students, having collocation awareness might be nearly tough. Collocation sometimes cannot be recognized literally, therefore the words cannot be applied with confident. Students may know individual words but their collocation awareness may be inadequate, because collocation frequently occurs in spoken and written English, and in fact English is not used in everyday life in EFL students’ area. Therefore, there should be a further struggle to learn collocation to expand their collocation awareness.

It can be determined from the description above that collocation awareness is an ability to store the combination of words to other words which appear naturally, to use them precisely in producing a language, and to construct meaning in comprehension. In addition, collocation must be recognized in a text or speech and learned in order to improve collocation awareness. By having collocation awareness, it will improve English students’ fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness in forming a language production and meaning in comprehension.

The Previous Related Studies

The previous study related to the topic carried out in the present study is presented below to provide the base theory. The first study was *The Relationship of Collocation Competence with Reading and Writing Skills* conducted by Kim and Bae (2012), they investigated whether there is any relationship in between collocation competence and both reading and writing abilities. Collocation knowledge, as well as reading and writing test were administered on eighty-six

students of Korean university. In conclusion of the study, reading performance showed no significant relationship to collocation competence, yet the writing quality showed a weak correlation to the collocation competence.

The second study is *The Effect of Teaching Collocation on Enhancing Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension* by Kiaee *et al.* (2013). The study used quasi-experiment as a research design to investigate the effect of collocation instruction in improving Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. It involved 70 students which were randomly divided into experimental group and control group. The experimental group was given collocation treatment while there was no treatment for control group. The study used reading comprehension pretest and posttest consisted of three reading passages which had about forty collocations to examine the level of students' reading comprehension. The finding reveals that reading comprehension of the experimental group outperformed the control group. Thus, it revealed that the teaching of collocation significantly improves EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The third was Yazdandoost *et al.* (2014) carried out research entitled *The Relationship among Collocation Knowledge and Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing Proficiency of Iranian EFL Learners*. The study focused on investigating both grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge and its relation to the language proficiency such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking. In this study, fifty graduate students from several fields of study who were taking English subject were involved. In this study, lexical and grammatical collocation tests were applied to measure the students' collocation knowledge. For finding out students' listening, reading, speaking, and writing proficiency, the study took an IELTS sample tests. The study revealed that the language proficiency has a relationship with students' lexical and grammatical collocation knowledge.

Research Method

The method of this study used quantitative method. Meanwhile, the research design was correlation study. This study examined the correlation between two variables. The variables are independent and dependent which were

collocation awareness and reading comprehension. The population of this study was fifth semester students who enrolled in English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at University of Islam Malang. It was chosen because they have already taken the related subjects which was investigated in this study such as vocabulary, morphology and reading subjects. Meanwhile, for data collection, the study is considered to take samples from large populations. It was made up of 23 students chosen using purposive-sampling technique.

Instrumentation

In conducting a research, the instruments of the research are truly essential. The research instruments determine the result of the study. Therefore the researcher administered two different tests in this study; reading comprehension and collocation knowledge tests. The first instrument was adopted from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test Preparation by Deborah Phillips, which usually used in university level. In other words, the test was appropriate for the subjects of this study as undergraduate students. This test consists of 40 questions in form of multiple-choice items. While the second instrument is collocation test, it was to measure students' awareness about two or more combined words such as various combinations of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives that go together frequently and naturally in language. Most of them were adopted from Natural English Collocation written by Jon Marks and Alison Woode. This test consists of 40 questions in form of multiple-choice items. Both tests were administered to measure the collocation awareness and reading comprehension of the students. Multiple-choice test type was used in designing both tests and each test consisted of 40 items. The time given to the students was 60 minutes for both tests.

Findings

The findings of this study were obtained from the various analysis. After the scores were taken by administering collocation awareness and reading comprehension test, the analysis started with the prerequisite analysis section, the normality test which performed to ensure distribution of score on variable was normal. Furthermore, the students' collocation test and reading comprehension

test were analyzed by performing Pearson Product Moment to find out the correlation.

Normality Test

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
X	.966	23	.600
Y	.917	23	.058

From Table Normality Test, the statistical output of *Shapiro-Wilk* formula reveals that the significant value of students' collocation awareness is .600, in which $.600 > .05$. Moreover, the significance value of students' reading comprehension is .058, in which $.058 > .05$. It means that both of students' collocation awareness and students' reading comprehension score are normally distributed as both of the significant values are higher than value of 0.05 or 5%. Since the prerequisite for the main statistical test is fulfilled, the next statistical analysis will use Pearson Product Moment formula to find out the correlation.

As the primary statistical procedure for analyzing the data of this research, Product Moment Correlation formula was used to analyze the data of collocation awareness and reading comprehension.

Pearson Product Moment Output

		X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.348
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.104
	N	23	23
Y	Pearson Correlation	.348	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	
	N	23	23

The table of significance shows that the correlation coefficient table of df 21 at the significance 1% is found to be 0.549. Based on the correlation coefficient of the calculation which was 0.348, it indicates that the it is lower than the correlation coefficient table score, which is $0.348 < 0.549$. This means that # there is no relationship between students' collocation awareness and students' reading comprehension.

Discussion

The result reveals that there was no relationship between both variables. This led to indication that other influential factors are possibly affect more on reading comprehension than collocation awareness. In particular, the result also showed higher mean score on collocation awareness rather than on reading comprehension. This result was possibly related to fact that vocabulary is an aspect which the students regularly practice more. Additionally, the acquisition of vocabulary aspects possibly is the easiest area for the EFL students to master.

From the data description of collocation awareness, students score was relatively low. It was shown by the mean score which is only 44.78 which is far from the standard completion in normal academic scoring. In this point, the reasons were supported by the argumentation of Foster (2001), who claims that non-native acquires the language by rules, and in contrast with native who improves their language by lexical routines. Besides, non-native learns words without considering the words that naturally come up with them, non-native possibly come up with incorrect collocations while trying to create collocation. In response to this problem, the researcher assumed that the collocational errors are caused by paraphrasing, analogy, overgeneralization, intra-language, inter-language transfer, and collocational awareness deficiency. In short, the plentiful competence of vocabulary which has larger variation than collocation, so it is possibly increase students lacking of the competence of collocation.

Meanwhile, based on reading comprehension result, it showed an extremely poor result which can be seen from the reading comprehension average correct answer which the students only correct 10 out of 40 questions. It indicates that other influential factors are possibly affect more on reading comprehension than collocation awareness.

In the reading comprehension test, which in this case using adapted test from TOEFL, using vocabulary and syntactic linguistic decoding, and comprehending the local message are as worthy as comprehending the global message and using background of knowledge in order to make the interpretation of the written message more meaningful. Those factors could possibly influence

the reading achievement excluding the collocation awareness. Moreover, the researcher carried out two tests on limited time because it was busy day for the students. That is why the researcher thought the student seemed unenthusiastic and they did not focus on answering questions. As consequence, students get unsatisfying outcomes on their reading comprehension.

In brief, the findings signaled that collocation awareness is not the only dominant aspect influencing reading comprehension. The researcher suspected the inadequacies of students in comprehension skills, especially in reading skills due to some of the factors including lack of the awareness to learn reading and motivation deficiency to enhance their comprehension of reading. Therefore, the students will need some improvements to be effective at comprehending.

This result is in line with the study conducted by Kim and Bae (2012), which inferred that the reading achievement not significantly related to the competence of collocation. As Alderson (2000) stated that there are several aspects to influence the process and product of reading such as their knowledge of background and subject/topic, culture, target language, and linguistic. It can be implied that even though the students have satisfying collocation knowledge does not guarantee their reading comprehension will be satisfying as well.

Conclusions

According to previous description, it reveals that students' collocation awareness weakly relates to their reading comprehension on fifth semester students of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at English Department of University of Islam Malang. The relationship is shown by the correlation coefficient which is .348 and significant at the level .01 in which it is lower than the correlation coefficient table, .549. It shows that there is no significant relationship of both variables. Therefore, the conclusion is that collocation awareness is not the significant aspect to influence reading comprehension.

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